

Message Text

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TO USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 262103

EXDIS TOSEC 569

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OAS, PFOR

SUBJECT: QUITO MFM AND AFTERMATH

1. FOLLOWING IS ARA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SECRETARY'S TESTIMONY NEXT WEEK BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

Q. IN VIEW OF THE DETENTE IN THE WORLD, APPARENT FAVORABLE SIGNALS FROM CASTRO AND THE FACT THAT A MAJORITY OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WERE KNOWN TO FAVOR LIFTING SANCTIONS, WHY DID THE U.S. ABSTAIN IN QUITO?

A. THE U.S. ABSTENTION AND OUR COMPLETE NEUTRALITY IN QUITO REFLECT A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN OUR POLICY TOWARD CUBA. AT QUITO WE WORKED NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST ANY PARTICULAR POSITION, MERELY SUGGESTING TO ALL DELEGATIONS THAT THEY VOTE THEIR CONSCIENCES, AND WE BELIEVE THAT ALL COUNTRIES DID INDEED VOTE AS THEY SAW FIT. THE U.S. ABSTENTION REFLECTED A CERTAIN SKEPTICISM ON OUR PART: WE STILL HAVE RECEIVED NO CLEAR SATISFACTION THAT CUBA HAS ABANDONED THE EXPORT OF REVOLUTION.

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Q. DIDN'T THE U.S.'S NEUTRAL POSITION AND THE FAILURE TO

LIFT SANCTIONS DAMAGE THE RIO TREATY AND THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM?

A. I DO NOT THINK SO. IN THE FIRST PLACE OUR NEUTRALITY SHOULD SHOW THAT WE ARE NOT TRYING TO THROW OUR WEIGHT AROUND UNDULY. WE ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND BELIEVE THAT ITS EFFECTIVENESS IS BEST ASSURED BY HONEST EXPOSITION OF VIEWS BASED ON EACH NATION'S PERCEPTION OF ITS INTERESTS.

AS FOR THE QUESTION OF THE FAILURE TO LIFT SANCTIONS DAMAGING THE TREATY, AGAIN I DO NOT SEE IT. THE RIO TREATY PRESCRIBES THAT SANCTIONS MAY BE LIFTED ONLY WITH A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF ALL SIGNATORIES. THAT TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY DID NOT EMERGE AND WE WILL LIVE BY THE TREATY. WHAT QUITO SHOWED IS THAT THE TREATY SHOULD BE AMENDED TO ALLOW THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY AND THE U.S. WILL SUPPORT SUCH A CHANGE IN THE OAS SPECIAL COMMITTEE NOW STUDYING THE RIO TREATY.

Q. THERE IS SOME CRITICISM THAT THE U.S. HANDS-OFF POLICY IN QUITO REFLECTS LACK OF INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA -- AND EVEN THAT IT IS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW DIALOGUE.

A. OUR POLICY AT QUITO REFLECTS ONLY OUR CONSIDERED OPINION OF THE SITUATION AND OF U.S. INTERESTS. THE NEW DIALOGUE WHICH BEGAN IN TLATELOLCO LAST FEBRUARY IS AS HEALTHY AS IT EVER WAS. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS OF THE HEMISPHERE ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED NOW IN DISCUSSIONS OF A WIDE VARIETY OF IMPORTANT MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING OF HEMISPHERIC MINISTERS IN BUENOS AIRES NEXT MARCH.

Q. YOU SAID EARLIER THAT OUR POSITION IN QUITO REPRESENTS A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA. DO YOU FORESEE FURTHER CHANGES IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

A. AS I HAVE SAID ON MANY PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THAT DEPENDS ON CUBA.
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Q. SOME PEOPLE IN LATIN AMERICA ARE AFRAID YOU WILL REPEAT YOUR CHINA SCRIPT, AND SUDDENLY APPEAR IN HAVANA NEGOTIATING DIRECTLY WITH CASTRO.

A. WE WILL NEVER ACT UNILATERALLY. WE WILL NOT RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA OR RESTORE TRADE WITH CUBA, UNTIL AND UNLESS THE 1964 OAS RESOLUTION IS PROPERLY

REPEALED OR MODIFIED. AND IN ALL EVENTS OUR CUBAN POLICY
WILL BE DETERMINED IN FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER
MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION. INGERSOLL

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